

Contributed

HOME MISSIONS AT MONTREAT.

Miss Barbara E. Lambdin.

"America for Christ; that the world may be won for Christ."—C. R. Hemphill, D. D.

Another Montreat summer has passed into history, and another Home Mission Conference has been declared "the best we have ever had."

The presiding officer on the three days devoted to consideration of the needs of the home field work of the Assembly's Committee, was Dr. S. L. Morris, Secretary.

The "Home Mission Conference" followed without intermission those on "Colored Evangelization" and "Ministerial Education and Relief" the subjects being so closely allied that the transition was scarcely perceptible. With the kind consent of Secretaries Snedecor and Sweets the first morning periods from nine to ten of August 19, 20 and 21, were devoted to the Mission Study Class; the following week, August 23, 24, and 25, the class taking the second period; thus gaining six days of valuable work.

In the conduct of the class, Rev. E. R. Leyburn, of Durham, N. C., used normal methods, and was able to overcome the obstacle of very little time for study of the lesson on the part of the students by using the splendid maps, charts and papers of his own class at Durham. The book used was "The Frontier," the thrilling story by Dr. Ward Platt of the vast possibilities and the urgent call to the church now presented by the West.

With the beginning of the Home Mission Conference proper the first period was given to the Bible Study, conducted by Dr. D. Clay Lilly. In his own able and impressive way Dr. Lilly sketched rapidly through the Old Testament the story of God's ancient people, bringing out strongly the parallelism in the history of the chosen race and our own history, as a people destined for great things, if we will remember the Lord our God, and serve Him only.

Definitely the declining nation was depicted, the foes at first internal in Israel's own heart of sin, and then the strange people who vanquished and led them away captive; and the warning was pressed home to many hearts in the perils confronting our own nation, the neglected and the aliens among us, and the materialism and irreligion, so many departing from the old paths of righteousness.

At the eleven o'clock service on Monday morning Dr. J. M. Wells, of Wilmington, N. C., discussed the question, "Are We Reaching the Masses at Home?" and solemnly the large audience was reminded that reaching the masses at home meant: "Bringing to the people here a gospel sufficient for their needs; bringing to every man, woman and child the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in such a way that it can be grasped by the mind, and will appeal to the heart and soul of the individual."

"We have just begun to awake to the fact," the speaker declared, "that we have been playing with Home Missions. There is work to be done, work that claims our interest, and that ought to grip our hearts, unsaved souls right here at home—do we feel any responsibility for reaching these masses?"

Following Dr. Wells, Dr. S. M. Smith, of Columbia, S. C., in a few concise words, emphasized the need of larger support of the work and increased activity. Dr. Smith said: "I think we have the greatest Church in the world, but we have lost in the past many opportunities through over-conservatism. Our motto has been too long 'Hold the Fort,' it is high time that we were changing that, and taking as our rallying cry, 'Onward, Christian Soldiers.' We have not emphasized Home Missions as the base line, the absolute necessity, for an aggressive and widespread Foreign Mission work. Let us be, not less conservative, but more aggressive."

The news of a stereopticon lecture by Dr. S. L. Morris on Monday evening filled the Auditorium almost to its limit. So many of our people, ministers and workers, coming to Montreat for their vacation, when they must recruit their energies for the year of work before them, must reluctantly miss some of the addresses that each day offers. But the promise of "pictures," especially when accompanied by an address by one who is sure to hold the attention of the hearer never fails to draw a large crowd, including, too, most of the little people in the community.

The Assembly's Home Mission work, especially the churches and schools built and assisted, made a strong appeal through eye and ear to the interest and sympathy of the large audience. Many were touched as they had not been before by the great needs, the great opportunities of the work, and the meagerness of the support the Church has given to this most important aggressive effort to bring the message of Christ to every soul in our midst that has not yet been reached by the Glad Tidings. It is wonderful what has been accomplished with so little; but even more wonderful is the promise of response to more adequate effort in behalf of the brother "whom we have seen."

Tuesday morning, after the Bible and the Mission Study Classes, Dr. T. S. Clyce, president of Austin College, spoke on the theme, "The Value of our Present Opportunities," citing as an example the Panhandle of Texas, which it was proposed, at one time our Church should abandon. Instead, it was decided that this vast stretch should be held, that our finest men should be put there, and money not withheld; and the results in four years even has more than justified the decision.

Rev. J. W. Caldwell, of New Orleans, next presented the urgent needs in Louisiana, "the neglected state in our Home Mission work." He spoke from a full heart of the misunderstanding that is

prevalent of conditions in Louisiana—of its advantageous location, mild climate, its healthfulness in spite of general belief to the contrary, and its great need of men to man its destitute fields. Mr. Caldwell asked, "Do you know that we have 300,000 French-speaking people in Louisiana?" These are not immigrants, they are descendants of the original settlers, most of them, but they are under the thralldom of Romanism, and need our gospel. He added, "I do not think there is any Presbytery in the whole Presbyterian Church that is doing the cosmopolitan work that the Presbytery of New Orleans is doing. We have services every Sunday for Germans, for Italians, for Chinese, for Negroes, for Syrians, and for the sailors of every port on the globe whose vessels come into our harbor. In the rural communities there are many who never heard a Protestant preacher. I bring you the appeal of need from men and women bound down in superstition, in shame and in sin, to whom we must come with the pure gospel of the blessed Son of God."

At the evening service, Dr. Lilly made a strong address on "Some Home Mission Ideals" that will doubtless set many thinking.

It was one of the treats of Montreat to have, among our other splendid home workers, Rev. Walter S. Scott, of San Antonio, Texas, "our apostle to the Mexicans in Texas," who was most gladly heard. He told of the 300,000 Mexicans who are now on this side of the Rio Grande, and of the work that our church is attempting among them, all too little. Yet God has richly blessed it, and in the eighteen years that Mr. Scott has been laboring among them he has organized sixteen churches, which have now a membership of over a thousand. He made known the needs of San Antonio as a strategic center, to which many Mexican boys and girls come each year to school. "If we strengthen San Antonio, we strengthen the whole mission," impressed with the importance of this work, Mr. Scott was given some assistance in building a new chapel. We ought to do more generously and wisely by our Mexican mission.

Dr. Henry C. Minton, former moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, so well known and so beloved by the Southern Church, gave a masterly address on Wednesday morning on "Our Country and Home Missions," the field, the force and the future.

At the last session of the Home Mission Conference Dr. C. R. Hemphill, of Louisville, Ky., took as his theme "Some Broader Aspects of Home Missions." With telling strokes the various phases of the work of the Assembly's committee were made to stand vividly forth—the weak churches that must be supported, or perish with the fruits, that, if nourished, they would yield to the Church; the call for the devoted labors of the evangelist, the mountaineers who are not only "grandly worth the saving," but are contributing splendid material for the